



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Michal Drake 858-740-0339

NEW TRAIL, OBSERVATION AREA OPENS IN SOUTH COUNTY Supervisor Greg Cox, Residents Celebrate Grand Opening of Dairy Mart Loop Trail

Community members, conservationists and local officials joined County Supervisor Greg Cox Friday for a ribbon cutting ceremony at the new Tijuana River Valley Dairy Mart Loop Trail.

"The Dairy Mart Loop Trail gives residents a great opportunity to experience the outdoors and enjoy the open spaces and clean air of the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park," said Supervisor Cox, who represents the area.

The new, one-mile surfaced trail includes a portion of raised boardwalk so visitors can enjoy the loop year-round without worrying about flooding. An observation area overlooks Dairy Mart Pond and features a bird blind—a screen with cutouts for close-up bird watching. More than 340 bird species have been spotted in the Tijuana River Valley, including the endangered Bell's vireo and the light-footed clapper rail.

The trail is located off Dairy Mart Road, directly across the street from the International Boundary and Water Commission located at 2225 Dairy Mart Road. Within walking distance of the Otay Mesa-Nestor and San Ysidro communities, the path gives young people and families an enjoyable and easily accessible experience.

The trail was a joint project with the County Department of Parks and Recreation and the California Conservation Corp. The County contributed about \$300,000 for trail materials and oversaw the project; the Conservation Corps received a \$300,000 grant through the state's Proposition 84 fund for water quality to provide labor for the trail's construction.

The County is working to establish a 22-mile trail system within the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park, and the completion of the Dairy Mart Loop marks an important first step. Paths and dirt roads throughout the valley are currently used by hikers, horseback riders and walkers. Establishing a formal trail system will improve the connectivity and health of habitat within the region, reduce illegal dumping and unauthorized access and diminish erosion and sedimentation problems that harm water quality.

The 1,700-acre Tijuana River Valley Regional Park comprises diverse habitats, from dense riparian forests to coastal maritime sage scrub. Besides the many bird species found there, the park is home to five species of snakes and small mammals such as mice and gophers.

The park's attractions include multi-use open space, a bird and butterfly garden, a community garden, a visitor's center and sports fields.

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COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 208 • SAN DIEGO, CA 92101